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The moral nature of the child in  
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# ETHICAL ADDRESSES

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AND ETHICAL RECORD

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## The Moral Nature of the Child in Relation to Moral Education

JAMES H. LEUBA

## Moral Instruction in the Public Schools

ALICE L. SELIGSBURG

## Ethical Construction as Preparation for Ethical Instruction

ROBERT A. WOODS

Constitution of American Ethical Union

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### **Mr. Walter L. Sheldon**

THE death of Mr. Walter L. Sheldon, on June 5th, after an illness of ten months, is a most serious loss, not only to the St. Louis Society but to the whole Ethical Movement. Mr. Sheldon founded the Society in St. Louis twenty-one years ago, and his great ability, intense earnestness and whole-souled devotion as its leader and lecturer, have made it one of the largest and strongest of all the Ethical Societies.

An appreciation of Mr. Sheldon's life and work will be given in a future number.

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## THE MORAL NATURE OF THE CHILD IN RELATION TO MORAL EDUCATION\*

BY PROFESSOR JAMES H. LEUBA, BRYN MAWR COLLEGE.

ALLOW me to remind you that the human being is both physical and psychical—he has a body as well as a mind—and that therefore factors of two orders psychical and physical are to be considered in ethical education.

I shall not dwell long upon the relation existing between the physical and the moral. The time when consigning the body to Hell was thought to be a way of saving the soul is past. It is now recognized and acknowledged that in a very intimate sense body and mind are one, and are damned or saved together. But, we have only begun to realize the extent to which our conduct is rooted in qualities and propensities of our bodily organism. We have not even made a start toward learning how to modify undesirable qualities and propensities by physical means; yet, there can be no doubt that, did we only know how, temperament itself could be modified by the right use of the proper kind of foods and drugs taken early and long enough. We are, however, learning the disastrous influence upon mental and moral growth of common defects of sight and of hearing, of adenoid growths, of chronic, irritating discharges from mucous membranes, of insufficient nutrition. In a few cities a determined and in-

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\*Address before the Moral Education Conference, held under the auspices of the American Ethical Union, New York, May 11, 1907.



telligent effort is being made to remedy these physical evils, or, where they cannot be cured, to place the children in classes fitted to their condition. If anyone among you is tempted to think that I am giving undue weight to these slight physical disorders, let him take the trouble of informing himself on the mental retardation, and even permanent stupidity, engendered<sup>a</sup> by the presence of, for instance, adenoid growths. In this city, which by reason of its size, of its wealth, and of its scientific resources, should be in the lead, what is being done as well as the necessity for it may be gathered from the following abstract from the report of Superintendent Maxwell:

"Up to a comparatively recent date the Health Department of the city, in its examination of school children, confined its energy to the detection of contagious disease, and to the temporary exclusion of pupils suffering from such disease. Except in Manhattan, the work of the Health Department in the schools is still so limited. When Dr. E. J. Lederle was commissioner of health a beginning was made in the examination of children in Manhattan to discover defects which retard physical development and intellectual progress. Under Dr. Thomas Darlington this work has been continued and extended. During the year 1906, 78,401 children were examined; and the following are some of the results:

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| No. of cases of bad nutrition .....             | 4,921  |
| No. of cases of enlarged anterior glands .....  | 29,177 |
| No. of cases of enlarged posterior glands ..... | 8,664  |
| No. of cases of chorea .....                    | 1,380  |
| No. of cases of cardiac disease .....           | 1,096  |
| No. of cases of pulmonary disease .....         | 757    |
| No. of cases of skin disease .....              | 1,558  |
| No. of cases of deformed spine .....            | 424    |
| No. of cases of deformed chest .....            | 261    |
| No. of cases of deformed extremities .....      | 550    |
| No. of cases of defective vision .....          | 17,928 |
| No. of cases of defective hearing .....         | 869    |
| No. of cases of defective nasal breathing ..... | 11,314 |
| No. of cases of defective teeth .....           | 39,597 |
| No. of cases of deformed palate .....           | 831    |
| No. of cases of hypertrophied tonsils .....     | 18,306 |
| No. of cases of posterior nasal growths .....   | 9,438  |
| No. of cases of defective mentality .....       | 1,857  |



"The total number found to require medical or surgical treatment was 56,259, out of 78,401 examined. The great majority requiring treatment were among those backward in studies, from one to five years behind the grade to which, on account of age, they would naturally belong. Experience has amply demonstrated that when a child is intractable or deficient, and is at the same time suffering from a removable physical cause, the removal of that cause almost immediately works a wonderful change, both in deportment and ability. If any way could be devised by which all children suffering from the maladies reported by the Health Department could have proper medical and surgical treatment, not only would such children be enormously benefited, but the present school facilities could be utilized to much better advantage."

I pass on to the consideration of moral education dealing directly with the psychic nature of man, and I begin with a truism.

From the point of view of conduct nothing more can be desired for a man than that he should know at any particular moment what he ought to do and how to do it, and, that he should have the physical and moral energy to make a start and continue to the end. Ethical training is to strive, then, toward two more or less distinct, and yet never to be isolated, ends: (1) *The enlightenment of the will*. In itself the will is blind. Knowledge is required in order that we may judge aright. Power without knowledge is a curse. (2) *The creation or the stimulation of appreciation of the good, the beautiful and the true—an appreciation so clear and so vigorous that conflicting tendencies will be overpowered*. For the knowledge of the right is not sufficient for its performance. To this insufficiency every day of our lives testifies. To knowledge must be added the enthusiastic temper, the devotion, the love, which dissipate opposition whether it comes from within or from without. "No heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic," says the author of "Ecce Homo."

*Knowledge* and *power*, or, if I may be allowed to use devotion as a synonym—*knowledge* and *devotion* is, as I understand it, the double aim of moral education.

Knowledge of what is right is obviously the first requirement of good conduct. It is therefore natural that the intellectual, or, if you please, the formal side of education should have been the first to occupy the attention of ethical philosophers. From the time of the Greeks to our own days they have searched for what they termed the *summum bonum*. In their pre-occupation about this they have forgotten, meanwhile, the dynamic problem. As a matter of fact, one whole school of ethics practically denies the dynamic problem. It affirms that clear knowledge of the right is all that is wanted. In opposition to this intellectualistic point of view, Christianity declared that salvation is not by knowledge but by Faith; and, it found in Love the principle of perfect life. Knowledge, said the Greeks; faith, love, devotion, says Christianity, hold the key to the ideal life.

The task before us to-day in the education of the young is to unite these two meanings. And since our knowledge of what is right is far in advance of our practice, the more urgent problem is to find ways and means of generating a spirit of positive and ardent devotion to moral ideals. It is the more pressing problem for two reasons: Our actual moral ideals, however defective they may be, will thereby be sooner realized and the more effective way to increase our knowledge—or to lead to its increase—is the practice of that which at the present moment seems best. The greatest defect of our ethical training is not so much its failure to teach what righteousness is, and to point out that which is righteous, as it is its failure to aim at the production of moral power. In intellectual education we

have until recently failed in a corresponding manner. The end pursued was to impart information, knowledge; while it is now generally admitted that the primary purpose should be to create interest and develop mental powers. The more important improvements which have lately taken place in our schools, have proceeded from the change of mind just indicated. The aim of all instruction, not essentially technical or industrial in its purpose, should be, with regard to intellectual culture, to create interest, and develop mental powers, and with regard to moral courage, to stimulate a sense of ethical values and to induce devotion to ideals of life.

It is often said that the task of the teacher, in so far as he is concerned with conduct, is the formation of good habits. Yes, good habits should be formed. Habits make a second nature. We want children to have good moral habits. But to set up the establishment of habits as the end of moral education involves a lamentable contraction, limitation, restriction, of the energies of life. Make of someone a bundle of habits and you rob him of the most precious possessions of man. You convert a spontaneous being into an automaton: you drive out the spirit to make the machine: you do away with reflective morality. Moral habits as the end of ethical education would lead to a state of society like that of classical China.

The Christian religion in its various branches has tried, in its own way, to provide for the development of ethical power. It has appealed to the impulses, aspirations, affections, and emotions. The lay school, on its side, took up as its task the imparting of knowledge by arid intellectual methods. The two aims must be united—I do not say the two methods. How can this be done? How can the school education be made to develop mental power and

moral vigor? That is the problem before our people, and more directly before our boards of education.

Having reached this point, I have practically finished my task, since it was intended by the makers of the program that I should open the discussions of the day, and that the other speakers should tell us how the several branches of the school curriculum should be used in order to serve the true purpose of education. Before closing, however, I wish to make a general remark concerning one of the principles which, it seems to me, should guide us in this task. Man is an ethical being because he is a social being. If every individual lived in isolation there would be no morality, at least not the morality of which we are now speaking. If morality is a social product, if the moral sense is the outcome of social life, then moral aspiration and moral enthusiasm, and also moral knowledge, arise in community life out of the social relations. There is no other school of morality than life. From the point of view of ethics, the school should consist of devices for bringing to the children a greater variety, and a larger number of effective experiences than would otherwise fall to his lot. It should further seek to provide these experiences in such a way, and under such circumstances, that the child should understand their meaning and feel their potency. At this point, I shall let Professor John Dewey continue and conclude the remarks I wish to make:

"In the schoolroom," says this philosopher and educator, "the mortar and the cement of social organization are alike wanting. Upon the ethical side, the tragic weakness of the present school is that it endeavors to prepare future members of the social order in a medium in which the conditions of the social spirit are eminently wanting." "We must conceive of work in wood and metal, of

weaving, sewing, and cooking as methods of life, not as distinct studies. We must conceive of them in their social significance, as types of the processes by which society keeps itself going, as agencies for bringing home to the child some of the primal necessities of community life, and as ways in which these needs have been met by the growing insight and ingenuity of man."—"The School and Society," John Dewey, University of Chicago Press, pp. 27 and 28.

## MORAL INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS\*

BY ALICE L. SELIGSBURG.

ACCORDING to the curriculum prescribed by the Board of Education for the elementary schools of this city, ethics is to be included in the work of every grade. Moreover, the Board has gone so far as to provide a syllabus in ethics, for the use of teachers. But although the syllabus has marked merits, it is held by the teachers to be inadequate, for, in the first place, it does not tell them how to carry out the advice it offers; and in the second place, it does not take into account the fact that virtuous and intelligent men and women, are not by virtue and intelligence alone fitly equipped to teach ethics. Because the syllabus gives but vague instead of clear and detailed suggestions, and because the Board has not considered the need for special preparation on the part of teachers of ethics; therefore we find that ethics appears as a rule only on *written* programs, that seldom if ever are courses in the subject planned and followed in the public schools.

In order to make clear from the start just what is the thesis I wish to elaborate in the following paper, let me say, that owing to the lack of a specially prepared body of instructors, I am opposed to the immediate introduction of a systematic course of ethics into the schools; but that inasmuch as direct ethical communications must needs and

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\*Paper read before the Moral Education Conference, under the auspices of the American Ethical Union, at New York, May 11, 1907.

do take place in every class-room, between teacher and pupils individually or *en masse*, on such subjects as disorder, the punishment of culprits, promotions, lack of concentration, indolence, etc., therefore I think it is well, for the time being to utilize and develop what already exists in a rudimentary state. I think it advisable for us to move forward slowly, until we have prepared the special teachers without whom it is vain to attempt to give a systematic course. In conclusion I wish to suggest means for preparing these special teachers.

To begin with, then, let me state my objection to the immediate introduction of an elaborate course of ethics into the public schools, even granted that such a course has been carefully planned in detail for the help of teachers. As one of the speakers at the first convention of the Religious Education Association said in 1903: "Moral or ethical knowledge no more comes naturally of itself to the teacher than to any one else; and especially if it is to be presented to others must it be learned in some orderly and systematic way. The possession of personal morality no more qualifies for teaching morality, than does the fact that I personally (as far as anybody knows) possess a perfect outfit of bones, muscles, arteries, veins, lungs, etc., qualify me to be demonstrator in anatomy in a university medical school." Moreover, the sort of teaching that is based on syllabi or textbooks in the teacher's hands cannot be effective. To be effective, the lessons must be the outcome of the teacher's own experiences of life. Therefore we must try to get the teacher to follow a course of reasoning and self-searching and observation that will bring him to the conviction of the truth and the importance of the lessons he is to impart. Any less personal preparation will result in flat lessons, that will in the long



run create contempt among the children and weary distaste for whatever goes by the name ethics. It seems to me that the evils which result from poor teaching are in proportion to the closeness of the relation between the study taught and the life of the student; and that inasmuch as ethics is a partial revelation of the ways of life, the winding ways that lead from causes to their effects in the inner and outer worlds, therefore this particular study bears a most intimate relation to life; and therefore a poor ethics teacher is likely to do more harm than a poor teacher of physics, mathematics, geography, history, etc. Hence we ought not to permit anyone and everyone, prepared or unprepared, to try his hand at teaching ethics; and we ought not, by introducing ethics into the schools on an extensive scale *before* teachers are prepared for the purpose, to set in motion a force whose course it will be hard to control.

But, let us ask ourselves, is the thing we wish eventually to introduce already present in a rudimentary state? And can we build up on what we have at hand? In other words, are there any questions of conduct, which, by the very circumstances of school life, teachers are compelled to discuss with their pupils, and on which they already, often unconsciously, give more or less well-conducted lessons? If so, is it not a *comparatively* simple matter to train teachers to give those ethics lessons well which so many now give poorly? Instead of at once imposing a fully planned ethics course from without, can we not find the nucleus of such a course already in the schools? Let me illustrate my meaning. There is probably no teacher who has not at some time found it necessary to explain to the children just why they are held

to silence and order during the school session. Since this is the case, why not see to it then that the teacher herself understands the subjective as well as the practical value of discipline, and is provided with a series of lessons through whose aid she can in the first place make her conclusions clear to the children, and in the second place can win the children over emotionally, so that they will be eager to test their own powers of self-control. It seems to me that this kind of help might be given to the teachers who desired it, in classes or conferences established for the purpose. It is not enough to say, as do so many of the syllabi that I have seen: Give lessons on obedience, order, etc. We must show the teacher how to go to work. A two-fold responsibility rests upon those who urge the introduction of even a transitional course of ethics into the schools; they must first deal with the teacher as a *student* to whom the principles underlying given situations must be made clear; and then, dealing with the teacher as a *teacher*, they must supply him or her with material for ethical lessons.

But whence is this material to be drawn? Perhaps the first thought that comes to most of us in reply is that our material must consist largely of stories—historical, biographical, or purely imaginative—in prose or in verse. Indeed many persons think that the successful teaching of ethics to the young depends on the variety and beauty of the illustrative incidents at the teacher's disposal. Without a large supply of stories they fear they could not teach, for not only is the story the centre from which they work, but it is also often the circumference of their work. But, I should like to ask, do stories really influence our conduct? Sometimes, but not often, at any rate not so often as we incline to think they do. Of course they do

influence us in so far as they acquaint us with the standards of the best men of all times, and thus become part of our environment. But it seems to me that at crucial moments, stories influence us only when we find parallels in our own lives to the experiences narrated. This is so with adults, and it is so with children. A man may be emotionally affected by the tragedy of King Lear, and having an analytic mind, may see that *one* cause of the tragedy was the old King's love of flattery; yet that very reader may never discern that he himself, in his relations with employes or pupils or friends, betrays the same defect, and that it is bound to influence his fate disadvantageously, perhaps tragically too. Or a boy may read Tom Brown's Schooldays twenty times, and wish he might have gone to Rugby, and have been under a headmaster like Arnold, without ever being inwardly affected by his admiration. For just as though he had never read the book, he may continue to take part in brutal hazing, may continue to believe that teachers and pupils must be natural enemies. So it is with many of the stories children hear at school. These fail to have a moral effect, because no transition has been made from the story to the life of the hearer. Pray do not misunderstand me. I do not mean that the moral of the story is to be pointed out. I mean only that the story is to be regarded as a bit of life, to which we can find parallels in our own experience. Take the story of the brothers who quarreled and whose father sent them a bundle of fagots to break, first tied together in a bunch, and later unbound, in order to prove to them that in unity lies strength. I wonder whether this much used tale has ever led any other than the first hearers to overcome dissensions? The way to use that story, it seems to me, is to refer definitely to some work—say the

presentation of a play, or the management of a school paper—where a group in which private differences are ignored, can resist dissolution better than a group divided into self-assertive individuals.

In fact we must get most of the material for ethical lessons from *life*, especially from the child's experiences of life; and must rather use the story as an illustration or a summing up of these experiences. To take a few examples from the many questions that arise at school and need illuminating, let me cite the following:

1.—What is the use of uncongenial studies? (Lesson on self-reliance.)

2.—What are the avoidable obstacles to punctuality?

3.—Unequal talents and the award of medals and prizes.

4.—The giving of presents to teachers.

5.—Boys' fights.

6.—Shall we appoint monitors?

7.—What can the teacher learn about her pupils when they are off-guard—*e. g.*, during study hours, recess, before and after school? (This is to show that manners may be an expression of qualities of character.)

8.—Asking for help.

9.—Prompting, or giving the wrong sort of help.

These and many more are the subjects of immediate and common interest to teacher and class, that can be and in fact frequently are used as starting points of serious communications.

As has been said before, if the lessons are to be given with spirit, the teacher ought first to be convinced of the correctness and importance of the conclusions she is about to teach and ought, moreover, to have a wider view of the subject and deeper insight into the very heart of the matter than can be re-

vealed to children. For instance, before outlining for the teachers a series of lessons on tale bearing (snitching or tattling,) adapted to use in their classes, we must first try to dispel the fog that fills most minds as soon as we put the question as to the wisdom or folly of permitting or requesting children to report offenders. And we must also point out, if we can, that the problem arising at school whenever there is a conflict between loyalty to a teacher to whom a report seems to be due, and loyalty to comrades, is not a unique and isolated question, but one that comes up again and again in adult life with only a change of setting. To show how hazy are our views on some of the matters with which we *must* deal, whether we will or not, let me tell of a discussion that took place some time ago among a group of teachers, on the question above mentioned, to-wit: Is it ever wise to allow or to induce children to tell tales on one another? The opinions at first voiced were almost unanimously against reporting, for the reason that it encouraged a critical, malicious or hypocritical spirit. Nearly all the teachers asserted that they had told their classes that they would not pay any attention to tales. One teacher, however declared that it was sometimes necessary to listen to complaints; she had found that she could not always ignore them; on the other hand, realizing the wrong motives that frequently lead to tale bearing, she had notified her pupils that where-soever she found it necessary to punish a culprit against whom a comrade had informed, she would also punish the tale bearer. By making tattling a punishable offense she hoped to prevent tattling, and yet at the same time, in case there were any tattling, to preserve her liberty to punish the misdemeanors complained of. There was one teacher, indeed, who believed it was sometimes wise to

*induce* children to report one of their number. When asked to be more explicit, she said: "When any serious evil has arisen." But on probing deeper it became evident to all that they could not invariably distinguish between serious and less serious evils; in school, as in the world outside, under certain conditions it was wiser *not* to report grave offenses. Moreover, they agreed that it would be unwise to leave the discriminating between weights to children. Taking into account these varieties of opinion, this confusion of thought in regard to an important subject, must we not admit that after all, before we speak to our classes, it is necessary for us to discover the principles on which our conclusions are or ought to be based? It is for this reason that I suggest the holding of conferences with teachers, in which questions of school ethics can be discussed, and in which, after conclusions have been reached, methods of presenting the conclusions to children will be worked out.

The fact that particular occurrences have been used as the bases or starting points of talks to the class, must not be taken to imply that the lessons are to be occasional or incidental. On the contrary, I think it is often, though not always, far more efficacious to have the class and the teacher exchange views frankly on a subject when no particular occasion has arisen that calls them forth. For if the teacher brings up a matter just when it is associated in the minds of the pupils with some fault or shortcoming of a suspected group or individual, his ulterior purpose is scented, the class becomes reserved and suspicious, the teacher self-conscious.

Although at the present time it would be worse than useless for us to introduce into the schools more than a transitional course in ethics, nevertheless we may look for-



ward to the day when this rather fragmentary course may become an entering wedge for the completer more systematic course which is contingent upon our having a trained body of instructors. Before I close, I should like to ask: Are there any steps which we can take toward the creation of such a teaching force? Two means of preparing teachers occur to me, the first indirect, the second direct. In the first place, we must gradually provide a great mass of published material for ethical lessons, from which each teacher can *choose* whatever makes a strong or convincing appeal to him or her. An attempt has already been made in that direction in England, by the Moral Instruction League. Such a league should be formed in this country, first for the purpose of collecting old and publishing new material, and translating whatever of value along these lines has appeared in foreign languages; and secondly, for the purpose of establishing normal courses for teachers, the direct means of preparing teachers to which I referred a moment ago. Given a mass of printed material, syllabi and the like, without teachers qualified to use them, and the books will be stones instead of bread. We need a normal course that will prepare special teachers to use the books in the right way, a course of more than short duration, conducted by men who have devoted themselves to this kind of work. Such a course should include, among other things:—the study of the great religious and moral teachers of the past, the study of juvenile literature, the study of the moral principles on which rest the economic and social issues of the day, besides psychology, methods of teaching and practice in planning and giving lessons; perhaps even the study of the various conditions of home, school, social, business and practical life in the various classes of so-



ciety—for different points must be emphasized in teaching the different nationalities represented in our schools—and still other very serious matters need special emphasis in the schools attended by the children of the rich.

Now the preparation of books and syllabi, and the training of teachers will take time; but if the work is worth doing at all, it is worth doing in the right way, and this is the patient way. Is not our task too great for haste? Can we be too careful in accumulating our materials? Too deliberate in laying foundations? Oh that the people of our country could once learn the lesson—

“Of labor that in lasting fruit outgrows,  
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,  
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.”

Let us, in undertaking the new task, not to be too eager for *immediate* results, let us not presume to teach the children that which we have not even tried to learn how to teach; let us not as we have done so often hitherto, build an inverted pyramid fore-ordained to ruin; let us slowly lay a sure foundation, in order that the future will not need to tear down what we have raised.

# ETHICAL CONSTRUCTION AS PREPARATION FOR ETHICAL INSTRUCTION\*

BY ROBERT A. WOODS.

THE mind has its being in the fulfillment of relationships. Mental action, we learn, is never complete without a process of the will confirming the interests which, when carried into action, make the person what he is. Personality is never properly revealed to itself until it is lost in action in the midst of the unexpected *contretemps* of nature or of human affairs.

Nothing is fully learned until it is conceived affirmatively and as an object of pursuit. The mind is but little shaped and guided except when it is molten and in flux. It is in the field of things craved and striven for instinctively and spontaneously that the educator's best opportunity lies. Hence the rising belief in the distinctly cultural value of vocational studies, a precise reversal of the older theory that little such result could be gained out of studies that called for action.

It is a mistake to endeavor both to arouse and to shape human impulse at the same time and in a single effort. The newly elicited impulse is not sufficiently assertive to bear the pressure of being shaped. It dies down under such an effort. The aversion to ethical instruction is often based on sound natural instinct. The discerning educator will be satisfied for a time to bring to the surface healthy

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\*Read before the Conference on Moral Education held under the auspices of the American Ethical Union, New York, May 11, 1907.

human impulses, and will bide his time about the most effective directing of them. He will apply his efforts for more largely ethical results to those motives in which personality is most alive and alert. He will seek to find human nature out in the open and under full cry before undertaking to lead the way to the quarry.

Such ethical leadership cannot be accomplished at arm's length. It can come about only through participation, and in a real sense absorption, in the momentum of the personality which is to be influenced. Working with people rather than for them is psychological as well as democratic. The currents of their lives must be conceived dynamically and must be actually swung out into. The people must lay hold on truth with power in order to learn at all. Those who would teach the people must know and be in and of that power. A common dynamic basis for personal interests and strivings is essential to that insight and influence which can come at the heart of things.

There is, of course, in every person a large, impenetrable element of temperament, understood often least of all by the person himself, the resultant of age-long heredity; yet a considerable proportion of what usually goes for temperament in every life is found to be not unintelligible to the dynamic participant in that life. When the whole range of personal ties, interests, hopes, achievements, defections is known and felt, a great part of the mystery is dissipated. If the ethical motive is present in the participant, concrete and easily possible steps begin instantly to indicate themselves, and what to the outside and superficial observer is merely the alteration of environment is seen by the participant to be effectual growth of character and spirit.

There is thus an essential difference between the two

types of social reformers who may seem to be dealing with much the same facts. One is engaged in creating a better framework and scaffolding for a more or less abstract humanity. The other is penetrating at least into the outer intrenchments of personality.

Among these outer intrenchments of the man's personality, often leading far in toward the citadel of his life, are his home, his neighborhood, his vocation, his recreation, his race, his religion, his citizenship. To shape the issues of his life in these different bearings is to settle almost inevitably how he shall morally confront the world, and is in great part to fix his moral destiny. The building up through vital participation step by step of moralized experience must be the beginning and end of social service, and must more and more be seen to be the larger element in conscious and determinate moral education.

The fundamental consequence of a moral order in the elementary structure of the home life, as well as the fact that this moral order comes by experience rather than precept, is perhaps sufficiently suggested by the reflection that the religions of the world presuppose it and take it for granted. The great figures of speech in which the principles of Christianity are expressed are taken out of the normal relations of family and neighborhood, and its principles cannot be grasped except as one has been wrought into the fabric of these intense human groups. The conception of God, and the moral values which go with that conception, can hardly be except as one has the conception of fatherhood, and the family sense comes only through experience. Recently at one of the settlement houses a very bright little girl with keen dramatic sense could not be induced to act affectionately toward the likable young man who was playing the part of the father.

The explanation came out afterward. The little girl's father was a brute, abusing the child and her mother. It would require some unusual circumlocution to arouse in this little girl's mind the thought of the All-Father.

The moral effect of want and congested conditions in weakening the ties of mutual respect and consideration in the family are very great. Francis Place, a man who came to have important political influence in England in the days of the Reform Bill movement, but in his earlier years had been afflicted with extreme poverty, wrote: "Nothing conduces so much to the degradation of a man and a woman in the opinion of each other, and of themselves in all respects—but most especially of the woman—than her having to eat and drink, and cook and wash and iron, and transact all her domestic concerns, in the room in which her husband works and in which they sleep."

The moral support and stimulus of neighborhood acquaintance is realized by every one as he goes away to an entirely strange place. The first sense of loneliness outlines itself a little later in the consciousness that some of the most important props to the moral life have been removed, and one's feeling of moral strength is for the time distinctly lowered. This moral situation is one in which many thousands of our city people must exist for long periods, and while thus weakened and exposed many of them inevitably make moral shipwreck of their lives.

In these respects the immigrants, set in families, are usually not so much in peril as that large population, predominantly native, in all our cities which lives in lodgings, where almost the last vestige of home tie and of neighborhood restraint and incentive has disappeared. The moral problem of the thousands of young men and young

women engaged in commercial pursuits who lead this dreary lodging-house existence is one of constantly increasing seriousness.

The home and the neighborhood is the moral menstruum in which the young life is immersed, and from which it takes its character. When they are seriously disintegrated, whether in outward fact or in sentiment, we are face to face with the most fundamental ethical problem with regard to that young life. The setting the child in rightly ordered currents of family and neighborhood intercourse will provide in innumerable instances the substantial correction of tendencies which, let alone, make development in character an impossibility. I am not referring now to such outward hygienic conditions as are a minimum essential to his growth into normal physical adult life, but to the accumulated experience of homely affection and virtue as a part of the very atmosphere of the little social group of which he is a part; experience of personal cleanliness, of thrift, of system and order, of good humor, of good fellowship, of care for the weak and admiration for the strong, of industry and skill, of wholesome and whole-hearted recreation, of loyalty and adoration. Most of these things are learned by the child, and laid hold upon deeply by the man, not as the result of specific instruction but through the endless ways of concrete suggestion, imitation, and trying out in action intimations that rise out of the subconscious being.

The whole scheme of work for neighborhood improvement in our cities where the neighborhood social structure has to a greater or less extent broken down has to do with establishing a democratic method for reconstituting the web of local ethical relationships. This is done largely, it is true, by the creation of certain new and artificial ties,

under the initiative of resourceful new comers into the neighborhood, and through the organization of forms of social life before unknown ; but all such work has its vital meaning in the endeavor to secure by direct contact or by reaction a revival of moral and moralizing reciprocity between husband and wife, between parents and children, among brothers and sisters, among neighbors and friends.

Every man's personal economic problem for him is inseparable from his problem of duty. His calling in life, his productive labor, his earnings, his capacity, his power as a consumer are matters which not only in their outcome but in their process decisively and consciously must determine much of his moral character. Every turning point in the course of the workman's life, particularly in these days of highly associated industry, involves critical problems of personal duty ; in the break-down of the old leaders to the master workman, the confusion as to the possibility of zeal for good work, the maintenance and advancement of the standard of wages and of life, the association of workmen to protect and advance their interests in an industrial system where association is the dominant force, the pervading scepticism as to the justice of the existing economic order and the claim of a great ill-defined but well-nigh universal outreaching toward a higher type of industrial civilization. These issues, which seem to some of us to have to do only with the superficial environment of human life, for vast numbers of men and women are penetrating into the very bones and marrow of their personal being.

Another great element of our people, not so important perhaps from the point of view of their influence but quite as great in number, spend much of the spontaneous, insistent energy of their lives in the search for recreation. It



was a wise man of old who said, "If I could but write the songs of a nation I care not who should make its laws." To the realistic ethical insight, the popular print, the drama, the concert-hall, the dance, the café, the excursion resort, constitute the great matrix in which the moral life of much of the future American nation is being cast.

The fact that the nation has its growth so largely by immigration brings it about that loyalties of race and of religion create among us a variety of special ethical issues whose effect on personal character and moral progress is profound. Bound up with impulses deeply embodied in the different human types, these issues from their very nature must be affected, if affected at all, by the gradual building up of ethical reciprocity upon a basis entirely apart from that on which these sides of life rest. The type of agency for social reconstruction which is wholly neutral as to points of conflict between the different races and religions is essential to the building up of such a measure of common national and human consciousness as must lie at the basis of all well proportioned personal moral growth.

The training of our people, and particularly of the new generation, in the art of making quickly a large number of human adjustments so as to work in tune with different kinds of people and groups different in motive and extent is a kind of moral discipline which refers more particularly than any other to the precise needs of the present day and of the immediate future. If morality has to do with what vitally is, if its watchword is not constraint but opportunity, the greatest of all moral sanctions is that which has to do with entering largely and deeply into human association with all its undeveloped, undreamed of potentialities for the enrichment and expansion of human life, for the fulfillment of human destiny.

# CONSTITUTION

## OF THE

# AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION

AS AMENDED MAY 11, 1907.

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### ARTICLE I.—NAME.

The name of this organization is "The American Ethical Union," and the same is organized by the Society for Ethical Culture in the City of New York, the Society for Ethical Culture in the City of Chicago, the Society for Ethical Culture in the City of Philadelphia, the Ethical Society of St. Louis and the Society for Ethical Culture of Brooklyn, and shall be composed of the Societies named and such other Societies for Ethical Culture and similar organizations as may be admitted to the American Ethical Union as hereinafter provided.

### ARTICLE II.—OBJECTS.

SECTION 1. The General Aim of the Union is: To assert the supreme importance of the ethical factor in all the relations of life—personal, social, national and international, apart from any theological and metaphysical considerations.

SECTION 2. The Special Aims are: (a) To bring the organizations in the Union into closer fellowship of thought and action. (b) To promote, and to assist in, the establishment of ethical organizations in all sections of the United States. (c) To organize propaganda and to arrange ethical lecturing tours. (d) To publish and spread suitable literature. (e) To promote ethical education in general and systematic moral instruction in particular, apart from theological and metaphysical presuppositions. (f) To promote common action, by means of Special Congresses and otherwise, upon public issues which call for ethical clarification. (g) And to further other objects which are in harmony with the General Aim of the Union.

## 312 CONSTITUTION OF AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION.

### ARTICLE III.—MEMBERSHIP.

SECTION 1. Every member of a Society for Ethical Culture which is a constituent part of the American Ethical Union shall be *ipso facto* a member of the Union.

SECTION 2. The Executive Committee shall have power to elect to honorary membership such persons as it may consider entitled to recognition on account of distinguished services rendered to the cause of ethical progress.

### ARTICLE IV. GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATION.

SECTION 1. The government of the American Ethical Union shall be vested in an Annual Assembly, which shall be composed of (a) the official Leaders and Associate Leaders of the several Societies belonging to the Union; and (b) delegates chosen by these Societies and duly certified by their respective Secretaries.

SECTION 2. Each Society, whatever the number of its members, shall be entitled to one delegate, and to one additional delegate for every fifty members or fraction thereof.

### ARTICLE V.—FINANCES.

Each constituent Society shall contribute to the funds of the Union a sum not less than three per centum of its annual subscriptions from regular members and such further sums as its governing Board may deem wise.

### ARTICLE VI.—EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

SECTION 1. An Executive Committee shall be created at each Annual Assembly, which shall manage the affairs of the Union in the interim between Assemblies. This Executive Committee shall consist of fifteen members, five of whom shall be chosen by the vote of a majority of the leaders and associate leaders representing constituent Societies in the Union, and ten of whom shall be elected at the Annual Assembly by the delegates present.

SECTION 2. The Executive Committee shall choose its Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The order of business at each annual or special meeting shall be provisionally determined by the Executive Committee, and reported on its behalf at the opening of each meeting; but shall at all times be subject to modification and control by the main assembly.

SECTION 3. The Assembly of Delegates shall be called to order by the Chairman of the Executive Committee, or, in his absence, such other person as the Executive Committee shall have appointed, and such Chairman or appointee shall continue to act as provisional presi-

dent of that Assembly until the Assembly shall have elected a presiding officer. A motion for the election of such President shall always be in order.

#### ARTICLE VII. STANDING COMMITTEE ON FELLOWSHIP.

SECTION 1. The American Ethical Union shall create annually a Standing Committee on Fellowship. It shall consist of nine persons, five of whom shall be chosen by the Leaders of Societies belonging to the Union and four of whom shall be elected at the Annual Assembly. The duty of this Committee shall be to receive all applications of persons seeking official recognition by the Union as Ethical Teachers or Leaders, and of Societies desiring to secure membership in the Union. These applications shall be carefully considered by this Committee of Fellowship and its judgment respecting the acceptance or rejection of such applications shall be reported at the following Assembly of the Union, in the form of a recommendation for final action by that body. The Standing Committee on Fellowship shall, also, on receipt of any complaint against the moral character of an already recognized Ethical Teacher or Leader, or against the action of any Society already belonging to the Union, investigate the charges, give the accused person or Society an opportunity for defense, decide upon the case and present its decision in the form of a recommendation to an Annual Assembly or special meeting for final action; notice of such recommendation shall be included in the call of the meeting.

SECTION 2. A three-fourths vote of delegates present shall be required for reversal or important modification of the recommendations of that Committee.

#### ARTICLE VIII.

Any person officially recognized by the Union as an Ethical Teacher or Leader may withdraw from that association with the Union, at any time, upon written notice to the Committee on Fellowship. Any Society belonging to the Union may withdraw from such membership at any time by sending a written statement to the Committee on Fellowship duly attested by at least three officials of the Society and showing that a majority of the members of said Society desire such withdrawal.

#### ARTICLE IX.—MEETINGS.

SECTION 1. There shall be a regular convention of the Union once in each year, at such time and place as the Executive Committee may designate, of which meeting at least thirty days previous notice to each Society shall be given.

SECTION 2. Special Assemblies may be called by the Executive Committee upon like notice, when in their judgment it may be necessary,

but no business shall be transacted at such special Assemblies except such as shall be stated in the call for such Assemblies.

SECTION 3. One-third of the whole number of delegates whose credentials have been filed and accepted by the Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

#### ARTICLE X.—AMENDMENTS.

This Constitution may be amended at any regular Assembly by a three-fourths vote of the whole number of delegates, accredited and accepted, present at the Assembly.

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## OFFICERS *of the* AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION

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ELECTED MAY 11TH, 1907.

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#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

*Chairman* : Professor E. R. A. Seligman, New York.

*Secretary* : S. Burns Weston, Philadelphia.

*Treasurer* : Mrs. Samuel S. Fels, Philadelphia.

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| NEW YORK :     | Prof. Felix Adler,<br>Prof. E. R. A. Seligman,<br>Mrs. Frances Hellman,<br>Mr. R. B. Hirsch. |
| PHILADELPHIA : | Dr. A. P. Brubaker,<br>Mrs. S. S. Fels,<br>Mr. S. Burns Weston.                              |
| BROOKLYN :     | Dr. H. Delmar French,<br>Mr. Leslie Willis Sprague.  |
| ST. LOUIS :    | W. A. Brandenberger,<br>Mr. Robert Moore,<br>Mr. Walter L. Sheldon.                          |
| CHICAGO :      | Mr. William M. Salter,<br>Prof. Nathaniel Schmidt,<br>Miss Juniata Stafford.                 |

#### FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE.

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| Dr. Albert P. Brubaker, | Mr. Robert Moore,        |
| Mr. Percival Chubb,     | Mr. William M. Salter,   |
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